

flowers (*Pastiflora* sp.; M.: *drap, tubuñ*; S.: *wahluluñ, sũsũñ, 222*
wahamtari).

ENSILAGE.—A sort of ensilage is occasionally made by the Miskito
of various foodstuffs, as green bananas or plantains and pejivalles,
and by the Sumu of boiled maize. Such food is known by the name
bisbaya; it may be kept for six months, or even longer. 251

Green bananas or plantains are peeled and buried in the ground
upon a layer of large bijagua leaves and then covered up with another
layer of leaves and earth. The Indians claim that no worm will
get into the food when the work has been done carefully. The whole
is not uncovered until required for food. The fruit retains its natural
whitish color, but will turn black immediately upon exposure to the
air. *Bisbaya* is consumed either in the shape of a beverage, after
being boiled with water, or it is baked between leaves into a sort of
bread (M.: *bisbaya tanka*; S.: *bisbaya pañni*). " 252

The fruit of the pejivale palm, which has been stored in this
manner, is always taken in the shape of a drink. It is boiled again,
when taken out of the soil, mashed, strained, and mixed with wabul. 272

The Sumu rarely make use of this manner of preserving food,
except for maize. The latter is steeped in lye of wood ashes to remove
the outer skin, and then buried for a few months. After being
taken out of the ground it is preserved in baskets over the smoke
until needed as food. These various kinds of *bisbaya* all have a very
offensive odor, which may be smelled from a great distance.

Another manner of ensiling is practiced more frequently by the
Sumu. Maize or bananas from which the skin has been removed
are placed in running water until they partially ferment, and are
then dried in the sun. For this purpose they are made into large
leaf parcels and deposited in the neighboring creek. This sort of
food (M. and S.: *kvakwa, tãra, tulis*) has also a somewhat dis-
agreeable odor.

FOOD ADJUNCTS: NARCOTICS, STIMULANTS, EXCITANTS, ETC.

TOBACCO (*Nicotiana tabacum* L.).—The sukya uses tobacco as a
narcotic in order to throw himself into a condition of wild ecstasy;
during such an abnormal condition he is supposed to enter into rela-
tions with the spirits. He also blows tobacco smoke over the sick
persons in order to purify them. 276

" Bell (b: 27) states that the Creoles of Bluefields made plantains into "foofoo,"
that is, cut up, put into large baskets, and buried in the earth until partially
rotten, then dried in the sun and made into flour. The name "foofoo," corrupted
by the Miskito into *pupa*, is now applied to green bananas or plantains which
have been cooked, mashed, and formed into the shape of tamales.

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Still, it is not certain that tobacco was known to these two tribes in pre-Columbian days. Their names for the plant (M.: *tuako*; S.: *aka*) point toward its introduction by the Europeans. The Indian tribes living on the Pacific side of Nicaragua at the time of the discovery knew tobacco, however, and they smoked it in the form of cigars. Our name "tobacco" comes from the word *tabaco*, which the Indians of Haiti applied to a sort of pipe. This instrument consisted of a small wooden tube, shaped like a Y; the two points of it were inserted into the nose, while the other extremity was held in the smoke of burning tobacco, and thus the fumes were inhaled.

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At the present time the plant is not cultivated by the Indians under consideration. Leaf tobacco is imported from the United States, and this foreign product is preferred to the one raised in Central America. Among the Sumu smoking is confined principally to the men, but this practice is common enough among Miskito women and children. The leaf is smoked chiefly in pipes (M.: *tuako mina*; S.: *aka pan*, *aka pana*), which are made locally of clay, wood, or maize cobs; imported clay pipes are also bought in the shops. According to Wickham (c: 206), the Ulwa of Rio Escondido do not smoke the pipe, but use the leaf rolled roughly in cigar form made on European models. Very few chew tobacco, while the habit of snuffing is entirely unknown. Among the females the pipe is frequently passed round, each one of the women present taking a few puffs and then passing the pipe to her neighbor. A supply of tobacco is a readily accepted currency for the acquisition of food in the more primitive parts of the country. For small favors the traveler is also expected to give one or more tobacco leaves in exchange.

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CAYENNE OR RED PEPPER.—Various species of very pungent, small red peppers (M.: *kuma*; S.: *anmak*, *afmak*), growing in a semiwild state on perennial shrubs (*Capsicum frutescens* L. and *C. baccatum* L.), are used with food as a stimulant and as an excitant. They were found in the Miskito kitchen during the times of Dampier (I, 9).

The Miskito usually prepare a "sauce" (M.: *kuma laya*; S.: *afmak wasni*, *afmak waska*) with these peppers, which they mash and then add some lime juice and salt. They store it in bottles and pour a small quantity of the liquid on their food while eating. The Sumu, on the other hand, grind the red peppers on the metate together with coarse salt. Upon serving the meal the women place a little of this mixture on a large leaf, and every one seasons his own food. These peppers may also replace salt entirely. The large "sweet" chilies (*Capsicum annuum* L.), which grow on annual plants, are also occasionally planted and eaten as a vegetable.

263 or 1668 among the Indians (Sumu or Paya) living around Rio Guampú in Honduras.²²

VANILLA.—Sloane (a: p. LXXVIII) gives an account of the method practiced by the Miskito in curing vanilla (*Vanilla planifolia*; M. and S.: *diti bfinia*). The present-day writer has not observed that the Indians make any use of the pods, except in flavoring a drink prepared from cacao and maize.

249 ANNATTO.—Annatto (M.: *dulala*, *tmarin*; S.: *awal*) is cultivated chiefly for the face pigments furnished by the red coloring matter surrounding the seeds; it is not used as a condiment, except in isolated cases, where this habit has been introduced by the Ladinos.

263 COOKING OILS.—The kernels contained in the seeds of various palms 177 are made into oil, which is occasionally used in the kitchen. The most important one is that extracted from coconuts. The nut is grated and then boiled, the oil being skimmed off as it rises to the top. The seeds of the corozo (*Attalea* sp.), hone or oil palm (*Elaeis melanococca* Gaertn.), huiscoyol (*Bactris horrida* Oerst.), and the kahka palm are also opened occasionally to extract oil from the kernel. Cooking oil is also furnished by the red fruits of a forest tree (M.: *yari*; S.: *yara*), and by a small shrub called *wari-klua* by the Miskito.

263 SWEETENING FOOD AND DRINK.—Previous to the introduction of sugar-cane the Indians had to rely upon ripe bananas or plantains and wild honey to sweeten certain food beverages. Now sugar-cane juice is boiled into sirup or brown sugar. As soon as the juice has been squeezed out it is poured into a large pot on the fire; as the heating progresses a scum arises which is skimmed off with the aid of a calabash shell pierced with holes and attached to a long stick. When sufficiently thick the brown liquid is poured into bottles and kept until needed. For the making of sugar the juice has to be boiled somewhat longer; finally it is poured into wooden molds where it crystallizes.

VARIOUS.—The round berries of the allspice tree (*Pimenta officinalis*), which grows wild in the forest, are gathered, dried in the sun, and used to flavor certain beverages.

Black pepper and cinnamon have also been introduced into the native kitchen; both of these commodities are bought in the local shops.

● 276 The chewing of coca, which was a current habit among the Nicaraos of the Pacific coast of Nicaragua at the time of the conquest, appears to have been unknown on the Mosquito Coast.

²² "Hacen sal de unos árboles que hay en aquellas montañas, a manera de coyol o coco; rajan este árbol, haciendo astillas, quemarlo, hacen ceniza, hacen de ella legía; esta en una olla grande la echan, sola la legía sin la ceniza, y a fuego manso la van calentando hasta que se convierta en sal; es muy blanca, pero no tan fuerte como la que usamos." (Serrano y Sanz: 368.)